GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:424
ANSWERED ON:20.11.2002
INDO-BANGLADESH TIES
ANANTA NAYAK;AVSM, BRIG.(RETD.) KAMAKHYA PRASAD SINGH DEO

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to further improve bilateral relations with Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the talks held between both the countries at different levels during this year;

(c) the various issues which figured in the discussions; and

(d) the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA)

(a) to (d) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in parts (a) to (d) of the reply to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.424 for answer on 20.11.2002

(a) to (d) India and Bangladesh interact on an ongoing basis on various matters aimed at improving bilateral ties. A number of bilateral meetings take place regularly in addition to other visits at different levels between the two countries. Mr. M. Morshed Khan, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visited India on 16-17 June 2002 and the Minister of External Affairs visited to Dhaka on 24-25 August 2002. During the two high level exchanges, discussions were held at the highest level on issues of mutual interest. The discussions helped to strengthen and further enhance our bilateral relations and facilitated better understanding between the two Governments

Other important meetings that took place this year since January included meeting to review the Protocol/Agreement governing the Kolkata-Dhaka bus service (New Delhi, 14-15 March 2002), Director General-level talks between BSF and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR (Dhaka, 22-25 March 2002 and New Delhi, 28 October to 2 November 2002), second meeting of Joint Boundary Working Groups I&I (New Delhi, 26-27 March 2002),Trade Review Talks (Dhaka, 8-9 April 2002), 16th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (Dhaka, 21-24 June 2002), 4th meeting of Joint Committee of Experts on sharing of Teesta waters (New Delhi, 27-28 August 2002), first meeting of Joint Group of Customs Officials (Dhaka, 2-3 November 2002).

The meeting on Kolkata-Dhaka bus service addressed various operational issues relating to running of the bus service. Director General-level talks between BSF and BDR were aimed at promoting better understanding and coordination between the two forces guarding the borders. Meeting of Joint Boundary Working Groups addressed various pending matters relating to India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement, 1974. The Trade Review Talks focussed on promoting bilateral economic and commercial linkages. While the Standing Committee of Joint Rivers Commission addressed the issues relating to border rivers, the Joint Committee of Experts looked into sharing of waters of common rivers between India and Bangladesh. The first meeting of Joint Group of Customs Officials was aimed at enhancing cooperation between the Customs authorities and address various operational issues.